RELEVANT EXTERNAL RESEARCH REVIEW
(Full Report)

Ottawa Carleton District School Board (OCDSB)

Elementary Program Review

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Context / Introduction

The objective of this review is to summarize relevant research and theory that should inform decision-making regarding second language (L2) programming, particularly as it relates to equity and inclusionary practices in Canadian bilingual programming in English-language contexts with French as a second language (FSL) programs.[1]

The authors of this review adopt the stance that engaging research findings in any decision-making process related to language programming (and eventual realization of said decisions) must purposefully keep front-of-mind what is possible at the intersections of up-to-date empirical findings and the practical strengths and limitations of the context in question.

The following sections detail two key guiding principles informed by relevant and up-to-date Canadian-based research/theory that we feel should be kept front of mind when considering how to design equitable L2 / FSL programming for all K-12 learners in Ontario school systems. Considered collectively, these principles purposefully foreground ethical, practical and moral considerations involved in decision-making around inclusive and quality bi/multilingual English-French education that have been identified in the research to date.

1. Guiding Principle #1: EQUITY OF ACCESS

> All children should have the opportunity to become bilingual.
> *Graham Fraser, former Commissioner of Official Languages (2012)*

Three tenets are at the heart of this guiding principle:
- ➢ All students deserve the opportunity to access the benefits of additional language learning offered in their context as part of their schooling;
- ➢ Every learner is a capable language learner;
- ➢ Central to providing equitable access is the corresponding belief in learners' rights to equitable support (see Guiding Principle #2)

1.1 Benefits of additional language learning

It is well-established in the field of education that learning an additional language has many benefits. These benefits were recently synthesized in a scoping review of existing empirical literature conducted by the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT, 2017). The cumulative findings of this research review found that learning any additional language(s) yields the following benefits to all learners (including those identified as having exceptional learning needs):

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[1] While the majority of post-millennial Canadian empirical research in the field of K-12 FSL education has been conducted in the context of French immersion (see Arnott, Masson & Lapkin, 2019), we echo the position of Arnott and Masson (2019) who advocate that "stakeholders need not isolate their research-based knowledge of FSL instruction to studies situated in one specific program - there is clear potential for many findings to transfer directly across FSL programs" (p.5)

- Learning an additional language positively impacts cognition and creativity. For example, bi-multilinguals outperform monolinguals in focus, problem solving, tolerance for ambiguity, multitasking, cognitive flexibility and memory;
- As compared to monolinguals, additional language learning also enhances learners' overall language development, leading to stronger first language literacy (ex., in technical skills such as reading and spelling, as well as in understanding and interpreting) and a strengthened ability to learn further additional languages;
- This enhanced language development, in turn, fosters achievement in other content areas like math and science;
- Additional language learners have elevated communication and interpersonal skills, notably due to enhanced capacity to communicate non-verbally and to adopt contrasting perspectives. These skills promote empathy, international dialogue and global citizenship;
- Similarly, additional language learning benefits learners' intercultural skills due to an increased exposure and receptivity to language speakers of cultures different from theirs.

1.1.1 Benefits of learning French as a second language (FSL)

It is understood in the field that the benefits listed above apply to learning any additional language (i.e., they are language independent). Thus, not only do FSL learners in English-language contexts have the opportunity to access these benefits (as outlined in FSL advocacy publications like Canadian Parents for French [CPF], n.d., n.d.), but learning French also offers specific advantages linked to Canadian and global contexts alike. For example, as a country with two official languages, Canadians with English-French bilingual proficiency have been shown to enjoy both social and economic advantages beyond those of monolingual individuals (see Canadian Heritage, 2016). In addition to the same socio-cognitive benefits listed above, census data shows that "employment rates are higher for English-French bilingual workers than for either English-only or French-only Canadians" (Statistics Canada, 2006 as cited in Canadian Council of Learning, 2008). Learning French also offers global advantages as it is the fifth most spoken language in the world, providing users with greater economic and cultural opportunities (Berlitz, 2024).

The Canadian and global appeal of French language skills is particularly relevant for students in Ontario, where many school boards offer them the opportunity to take the *Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELF)* exam in Grade 12 (see Vandergrift, 2015; CPF, 2019). Upon successful achievement in the exam, students obtain an internationally recognized certificate that attests to their competencies in French (France Éducation Internationale, 2016). This certification is considered to be particularly valuable for students, as many Canadian and international universities and employers require it for admission or employment (e.g., Université Libre de Bruxelles, n.d.).

The above body of research speaks to the benefits of bi/multilingualism generally, and English-French bilingualism specifically. All students deserve the opportunity to access these benefits. The sections that follow highlight what the research has found in regards to common barriers to equitable access to such bi-multilingual programming.

1.2 A common barrier to accessing these benefits is the perceived risk(s) associated with learning an additional language. In the case of FSL in Canada, researchers have consistently reported that there is no evidence to support the belief that students who are at risk for poor academic performance are at greater risk in FSL than in English-only programs (see Bourgoin, 2016; Genesee, 2008, 2012; Mady, 2018b). And yet, exclusionary streaming in FSL programs (in French Immersion [FI] in particular) continues to occur, despite such exemptions / transfers not existing in other subject areas (Arnett, 2013b), giving FSL the unique status in Canada as the only school subject from which students with disabilities have been excluded (Arnett, 2013a).

Findings from studies on this topic show that this trend of exclusion is commonly driven by:
- The misconception that students with exceptional needs (i.e., students with learning disabilities), as well as students who are developing proficiency in English, who are in FI programs do not achieve academic results similar to their counterparts in mainstream English programs (Bourgoin, 2016); and
- A well-documented lack of resources, professional development and clear policy for including all students in FSL (Davis, 2019; Muhling & Mady, 2017).

As a result, it is often believed that such students should not enroll in FI or, if they encounter difficulties, should instead transfer to the mainstream "English program with Core French [CF]" option (Arnett & Mady, 2017; Arnett & Mady, 2018a, 2018b; Arnett, Mady, Muilenburg, 2014; Bourgoin, 2016; Mady, 2012a, 2012b; Mady, 2013). This segregating phenomenon has led to inequities between FI and English-with-CF programs, often referred to as the "streaming effect" (Bourgoin, 2016). The result is that FI programs are often characterized as being elitist (see Genesee, 1992 and Genesee & Jared 2008 as cited in Bourgoin, 2016).

This phenomenon is problematic not only due to its impact on student achievement and learning, but also because it lacks grounding in theory and in empirical research. In 2016, Bourgoin reviewed the existing research on inclusion in FI and affirmed that the enrollment of students with exceptional needs in FI "poses no detrimental risk to [their] learning" (p. 45). Said differently, many studies have determined that students with exceptional needs progress at a similar rate in FI compared to their peers in the mainstream English program (see Bruck, 1985; Cummins, 1984; Genesee, 1987, 1992, 2007a; Genesee, Paradis, & Crago, 2004; Paradis, Crago, Genesee, & Rice, 2003 cited in Bourgoin, 2016).

Specifically regarding the inclusion of multilingual learners, studies indicate that multilingual immigrant students excel in acquiring English and French in FSL programs like FI (Bourgoin & Dicks, 2019; Duncan et al., 2024; Mady, 2014) and CF (Arnett, 2010; Mady, 2007). In fact, multilingual learners have been shown to outperform their Canadian-born peers in English-French acquisition within these programs (Mady, 2015a, 2015b) and attain age-appropriate proficiency in both languages (Bérubé & Marinova-Todd, 2014). Moreover, immigrant parents/guardians of multilingual learners hold very positive views of their children's learning in FI (Dagenais & Berron, 2001; Davis et al., 2021). This evidence suggests that including multilingual learners in FSL programming (both FI and CF) does not hinder their development of proficiency in Canada's two official languages. However, as Davis (2023) argues, such inclusion necessitates mindful advocacy for the inclusion and empowerment of multilingual learners in FI programs by promoting more equitable pedagogy (such as that

described in the Support for Educators section of this report), as well as more inclusive policy that explicitly outlines how access to bi/multilingual education in both official languages (and not just one language) will be guaranteed to multilingual learners in Canada. Davis underscored that this is critically important in Canadian FI programs "that have historically privileged white, Canadian-born, English-speaking families to the detriment of racialized, newcomer, multilingual families" (p.171). Davis (2023) went on to add that the intersectionalities of what we mean by 'multilingual learners' in FI programs must be expanded in order to genuinely understand the nuances of each specific culture, family and population (e.g., migration histories, educational backgrounds, linguistic repertoires, lived experiences).

Recent research by Kunnas (2023, in press[2]) also touches on the notion of intersectionality, adding a critical perspective on inclusive practices in FSL contexts specifically linked to race and gender. They used an anti racism theoretical framework to conduct a critical analysis of "policies, operational procedures, promotional materials, program descriptions, guidelines, [and] curricula" that were all publicly available online by the Ontario Ministry of Education (OME) and two large Ontario school boards (p. 52). Kunnas' (2023) analysis led them to report that documents primarily portray a typical FI student as "a middle-class, White, established resident with knowledge of English and to a lesser extent, French" (p. 59). They added that the "identity of a raceless student" was foremost, which reinforces "the White norm" (p. 59). Furthermore, Kunnas asserted that the curricula and policies examined propose inclusive practices through simplistic generalizations, such as the repeatedly stated need to "include everyone", alongside recurrent use of words such as "race", "gender", "faith" instead of "Black", "gender non-conforming", "Muslim", etc." (p.60). Moreover, Kunnas provides concrete examples of how these curricula and policies are actualized in FI programs. Specifically, the participants reported chronic experiences of racism throughout their K-12 FI education and expressed ongoing disappointment due to the lack of racial representation "from FI courses and amongst the students and staff" (Kunnas in press, p. 29). Kunnas concluded by reminding us that true inclusion requires a critical approach; it's not just about including minoritized individuals in the program, but about designing a program that better serves everyone. Kunnas draws from findings (2023, p. 61) to propose concrete recommendations for decision-makers to consider in this regard:

• More entry-points into the program;
• More critical and less Eurocentric / colonial curricula;
• Expand and / or move FI school locations;
• Provide transportation to all students;
• Create an equitable enrolment model where more diverse students are prioritized;
• Offer free resources and tutoring to students;
• Provide supports for students with special education needs in FI and make them aware of these supports;
• Provide more resources and training for educators to support diverse learners in FI;
• Promote the program in poorer neighborhoods and to newcomers, ELLs, and those with special education needs.

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[2] The term "in press" refers to a publication that has been through the peer-review process and has been accepted by the academic journal for publication, but has not yet been copy-edited for publication.

1.3   Providing equitable access to bi/multilingual programming implies a belief in the capability of all students to learn additional languages. Bilingual programming like FI was originally designed as a program for a diverse range of students (Bruck, Lambert & Tucker, 1974); however, its realization in the present day often risks looking more like an enrichment program for "stronger" students (Arnett & Mady, 2010). The following concepts reflect empirically-supported, common understandings in the field of additional language education about proficiencies available to all students for learning languages. These concepts are regularly referenced by the researchers cited above when advocating for stakeholder acknowledgment of the universal potential for all learners to succeed and thrive in bi/multilingual programming (when equitably supported, as argued in "Guiding Principle #2 - Equity of Support").

1.3.1. Common Underlying Proficiency

The theory of common underlying language proficiency (Cummins, 1991) suggests that while languages in bilingual programs (commonly labeled "L1" and "L2") appear different on the surface level, they function through the same central cognitive system (as represented in Figure 1 below).
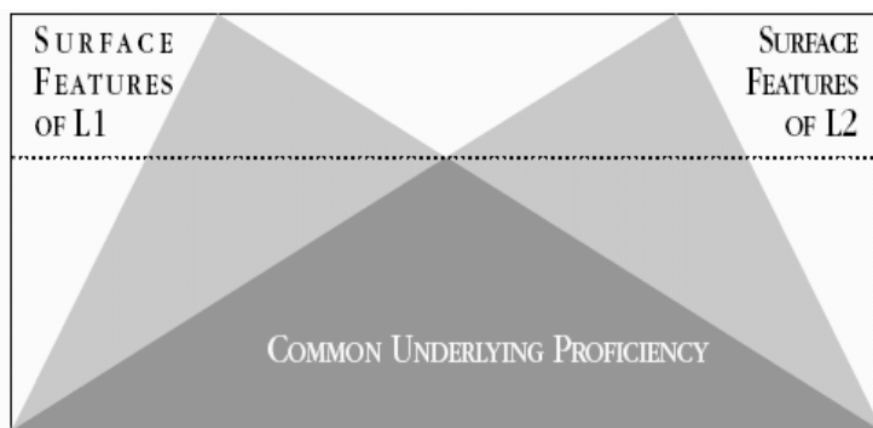

Figure 1: Common underlying proficiency (Cummins, 1991)

In this view, student language and literacy development is optimized when cognitive abilities - such as literacy, content learning, problem solving or abstract thinking - are developed across any and all languages students are using / learning. According to Cummins, skill-building across all languages in a student's repertoire contributes to their overall linguistic and cognitive development. Consequently, isolating language learning into completely separate silos is counterproductive, particularly in today's linguistically diverse environments. Rather, supporting and encouraging the development of bi-multiliteracy skills is key to developing learners' overall language and cognitive competences. Acknowledging all learners' common underlying proficiency embodies a move away from assuming that additional language learning should occur through monolingual practices (i.e., where the target language is the only language allowed in the learning context, including FSL classrooms- see Cummins, 2007). Such assumptions and consequential actions do not support optimal bi/multilingual development (see Jasińska & Petitto, 2018).

1.3.2. Cross-Linguistic Transfer

The concept of cross-linguistic transfer builds on Cummins' common underlying proficiency theory as well as his interdependence hypothesis (Cummins, 1979, 2001), which posits that learners transfer skills multi-directionally between all languages they know and use, allowing transfer of knowledge and skills from one language to support developing proficiency in others. According to Odlin, cross-linguistic transfer refers to the inherent "influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired" (1989, p. 27 as cited in Odlin, 2003). Studies indicate that this influence is multidirectional, occurring in bilingual contexts from both L1 to L2 and L2 to L1 (e.g., see Yang et al., 2017). This dynamic and multifaceted process impacts all aspects of language acquisition – from syntax and semantics to orthography, morphology and phonology (Yang et al., 2017).

Cross-linguistic transfer does not occur passively; it is a complex phenomenon that is shaped by learner's experiences, beliefs, and learning context (Larsen-Freeman, 2013). The accuracy of learner's judgments (see McManus, 2021) as well as the extent to which it is encouraged in classroom-based contexts have both been identified as factors in its effectiveness. Educators who adopt a bi-multiliteracy practice capitalize on students' common underlying proficiency and leverage cross-linguistic transfer between the language(s) students know (e.g., L1, L2, L3 and beyond). Specifically, a bi-multiliteracy approach helps learners use their linguistic skills in one language (L1) to enhance their development and proficiency in another (L2, L3), and vice versa (Ballinger, 2013; Lau et al., 2017; Lyster et al., 2009; Lyster et al., 2013).

Educators implement this by designing literacy activities that engage students' reading and writing skills through bi- and multilingual learning experiences. These activities can take various forms, such as targeted instruction and engagement with a specific literacy concept in the students' L1, followed by gradually building on this foundation with similar activities in their L2 (see Wise & Chen, 2010). Studies have shown that adopting bi-multiliteracy practices in Canadian bilingual programming contexts has positive impacts on both English and French development of writing strategies (Ballinger, 2013), critical literacy (Lau et al., 2017) word formation, morphological awareness (Lyster et al., 2013), phonological awareness (Wise & Chen, 2015), reading (Lyster et al., 2009), etc., while also positively impacting student engagement and teacher collaboration (Archambault et al., 2017; Lyster et al., 2009; Lyster et al., 2013; Thomas & Mady, 2014; Wise & Chen, 2010, 2015). Simply put - students in (traditionally) separated literacy classes are capable of engaging with the same material in both French and English, and experience benefits across both languages.

1.3.3. Critical Multilingual Language Awareness

Critical multilingual language awareness (CMLA) represents an understanding developed by all stakeholders in language education. At its core is the concept that languages are not "an ideologically neutral subject in the curriculum" (Cummins, 2023, p. 561). Instead, they are socially constructed and can be used to empower or to oppress (García, 2017). CMLA researchers insist on the broadening of one's view of languages to include their speakers and the related power dynamics (García, 2017; Prasad, 2022). For educators, this involves

recognizing the language(s) of instruction and its power to gate-keep educational privileges, as well as utilizing cross-linguistic transfer as a tool for teaching and learning for all students through understanding of bi-multilingualism as dynamic (García, 2017). For students, this means having the opportunity to learn using their entire language repertoire through activities that develop their critical awareness of languages, their speakers and associated power relations (Prasad, 2022). CMLA forms the theoretical foundation for Linguistically Expansive Practice, referenced in the "Guiding Principle #2 - Equity of Support" section that follows.

1.3.4. Intercultural /Transcultural competence

Finally, discussions of learner capabilities in additional language programming must acknowledge the inextricable link between language and culture. All students enter language education with their own cultural and linguistic repertoires. Intercultural competence refers to an ability that all learners have the potential to acquire, where they understand, communicate, and interact with people from diverse cultures (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006). It encompasses the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to engage respectfully, adapt behavior, mediate perspectives, and reflect on one's own cultural biases (Conseil de l'Europe, 2001). An extension of this concept is transcultural competence, which refers to the ability to turn inward and view one's own culture as foreign to others, to reflect on oneself and the world from the perspective of different cultures (Modern Languages Association, 2007). It is based on the belief that cultural diversity is both normal and advantageous for societies (Prasad, 2024). Similar to cross-linguistic transfer, transcultural competence is multidirectional, enabling individuals to cultivate skills in mediation, negotiation, and adaptability (see Piccardo & North, 2019); it promotes the ability to navigate and engage fluidly across diverse cultural frameworks rather than merely interacting with them (Trenchs-Parera & Pastena, 2024).

Central to designing bi/multilingual programming based on "Guiding Principle #1: Equity of Access" is the corresponding belief in their right to equitable support. Below are considerations for promoting equity of support for learners, educators, school administrators and parents/guardians based on established understandings around access, including relevant approaches (e.g., Linguistically Expansive Practice) and other relevant research that touches on both L2 and FSL contexts.

2. Guiding Principle #2: EQUITY OF SUPPORT

> In a publicly funded system, all students should have equal access to all programs and equal support within each program.
> *Genesee, 2008 as cited in Muhling & Mady, 2017*

With the knowledge that equitable access for all students in bi/multilingual programming is appropriate and important, it becomes essential to advocate that learners, educators, school administrators, and parents/guardians be provided with equitable support in order to fully benefit from said equitable access. A chronic finding in Canadian FSL literature has been studies reporting stakeholder beliefs in the importance of including all students in FSL programming, juxtaposed with requests from these same stakeholders for clarity on the optimal resources,

strategies and supports required to make it happen (see Arnett, 2010; Arnett & Mady, 2017, 2018a, 2018b; Bourgoin, 2016; Davis, 2019; Davis et al., 2019; Lapkin et al., 2006; Mady, 2010, 2012, 2018a, 2018b; Mady & Arnett, 2009, 2015; Mady & Masson, 2018; Mady & Turnbull, 2010; Mady et al., 2017; Muhling & Mady, 2017). In this same vein, Genesee (2012) identified enactment as the main challenge of adopting an inclusive approach to bi/multilingual programming for all:

> At-risk students can become bilingual and attain levels of first-language and academic ability commensurate with their learning challenges. The challenge is not usually for the children, but rather is for the adults around them. Evidence shows that language acquisition systems of at-risk students are extremely powerful, even when they do not function normally. The challenge is how to create a learning environment in which these children's potential can be fully realized (p. 6).

Key understandings from L2/FSL research are relevant to supporting students, educators, school administrators and parents/guardians within an equity of access orientation. The studies reviewed below identify several key supports for each of these groups that should be kept in mind when assessing how to optimize the success of quality bi/multilingual programming for all.

2.1 Equity of Support for LEARNERS

Inclusive education can be viewed as a process that focuses on "the identification and removal of barriers" and seeks to especially support students "who may be at risk of marginalization, exclusion or underachievement" (Ainscow, 2016, p. 147). Inclusive education plays a significant role in (additional) language education. For example, students whose home language is not the language of instruction can be minoritized in classrooms. The societal ideologies and perspectives of policymakers and educators on (heritage/home) language(s), race, additional language acquisition, and multi/plurilingualism greatly influence practices with such students (Jensen and Valdés, 2021). In these settings, policymakers and educators must act equitably to equip these learners with the support necessary for them to achieve academic success and experience social inclusion (Jensen and Valdés, 2021).

This demands a universal design for learning (UDL) (National Center on Universal Design for Learning, 2014) and differentiated instruction (DI) (Tomlinson, 2004), and may require accommodations and modifications to the curriculum, adapted materials and technology. Central to both UDL and DI is the belief that educators should plan and carry out teaching in a way that responds to the reality that each student is inherently different in regards to their individual strengths, interests and learning styles. According to Tomlinson (2004), all educators should differentiate their instruction in one or more of the following areas: what students are going to learn and when (content), the types of learning tasks and activities students engage in (process), the ways in which students demonstrate learning (products) and the physical and affective context of learning (affect/environment). Ethical principles at the heart of DI and UDL approaches are often cited when reference is made to supporting all students in bi/multilingual programming. For example, Baker (2011) links to DI when positing that students in bilingual programs who are of different socioeconomic statuses and/or with a wide range of difficulties

(including those with learning disabilities, low levels of academic abilities or behavioural challenges) "can learn successfully with integrated education that is adapted to their particular needs." (p. 346). In both FI and CF contexts, studies have shown that there is notable improvement in the performance of at-risk students when appropriate scaffolding is provided (e.g., Arnett, 2003, 2010; Bourgoin, 2016; Genesee, 2012).

But what does 'appropriate assistance' look like for learners in a bi/multilingual program context where equity of access is prioritized? In order for all students to access the benefits of learning an additional language, it is important for them to have the opportunity to engage in a learning environment that both *identifies* their needs and *provides support* to meet those needs. The following sections summarize theoretical understandings and research findings in this regard, many of which build further on concepts covered in the previous section (such as cross-linguistic transfer).

2.1.1. Early screening and tracking for the benefit of literacy / language development (in French and English)

Many studies to date have highlighted how screening and tracking early language and literacy skill development in both English and French can provide a more balanced profile of FI student proficiencies in both languages, while in some cases, also helping to identify potential students-at-risk and provide a predictive snapshot of future proficiency in both languages. Below are findings from key recent studies on this topic conducted in a variety of elementary full- and partial-FI contexts (most often in FI programs with a full English start, and subsequent addition of French instruction). Considered collectively, they showcase the potential for equity of support orientations that include early intervention focused on cross-linguistic transfer (as seen in the subsequent section):

- Reading comprehension in both English and French can predict future reading comprehension across both languages (Savage & Pace, 2019);
- Early decoding and linguistic comprehension can strongly predict later writing accuracy in English and French, underscoring the need for early screening in bilingual education (Savage et al., 2017);
- Phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge in English can significantly predict French reading abilities, even in the case of late bilingual education (Bourgoin, 2014);
- English lexical specificity at the start of Grade 1 can predict French reading difficulties later in the year (Krenca et al., 2020);
- Phonological awareness, along with general cognitive and linguistic skills in English, is a key predictor of French reading ability (Jared et al., 2011);
- Kindergarten print knowledge can modestly predict future ability to distinguish between English and French orthographic patterns (Jared et al., 2013);
- Home language morphological awareness (in this case, English) in Grade 1 can significantly predict gains in additional language (in this case, French) vocabulary. This emphasizes the importance of home language skills in additional language development (Lam & Chen, 2018).

2.1.2. Early <u>intervention</u> for the benefit of literacy / language development (in French and English)

Research in FSL, particularly in FI, demonstrates how targeted interventions in English and French can support early literacy development in both English and French (see Archambault et al., 2019; Côté et al., 2021; Lyster et al., 2013; Wise & Chen, 2010, 2015).
Such interventions support the principle of cross-linguistic transfer as being an advantageous phenomena to leverage in support of all students in a bi/multilingual programming context, particularly as it pertains to <u>proactive</u> prevention and mediation of reading difficulties and overall bi-multiliteracy development. Below, we provide specifics on exemplary studies conducted in elementary FI contexts that showcase the positive impact of prevention and mediation enacted in the name of literacy development in both French and English.

- Côté and colleagues (2021) conducted a supplemental reading intervention in English for at-risk Grade 1 students in FI, which compared "Direct Mapping and Set-for-Variability" (DMSfV) with a "Common and Best Practices" (CBP) approach. The experimental group (DMSfV) received English phonics instruction (on grapheme-phoneme correspondences) linked closely with shared reading with books containing the target graphemes. This intervention also emphasized "set-for-variability" to help students adjust pronunciations based on spelling patterns. The results demonstrated that the experimental group significantly improved in both English and French reading skills, suggesting that explicit phonics instruction, especially when integrated with real book reading and variability strategies, supports cross-linguistic transfer between languages. Findings highlight the potential of adopting such practices in FI programs to support English and French proficiency and to prevent early reading difficulties.
- Archambault and colleagues (2019) studied primary FI students' reading fluency. Specifically, the authors implemented an intervention in French in which students participated in individual sessions twice a week. During these sessions, students practiced reading French passages aloud multiple times, received verbal cues, observed modeled reading, and engaged in phrase-drill error correction (i.e., researcher identifies up to five words that a student reads less fluently; researcher models how the words are read; researcher asks participant to read phrases containing the target words). After the intervention, the authors tested the participants' reading fluency in French and in English. They concluded that the reading invention in French positively contributed to English reading fluency, again emphasizing the proactive possibility for FI learners to gain advantages through cross-linguistic transfer in this aspect.
- In their study investigating orthographic processing (i.e., recognizing and recalling the patterns of letters and words) and spelling with primary FI students, Chung and colleagues (2018) found that "French orthographic processing was significantly related to English spelling" (p. 306). This evidence suggests that orthographic processing skills in one language can positively influence spelling abilities in another, highlighting the potential for French learners to benefit from cross-linguistic pedagogy in this area.

- Thibeault and Matheson (2020) studied the cross-linguistic reading strategies that FI students used when engaging with translated and integrated dual-language children's books. When working with texts like these in the classroom, Thibeault and Matheson recommended that educators should not assume students know how to use corresponding passages in translated dual-language texts and should explicitly model this strategy, including teaching "syntactic, lexical, and morphological similarities" between the languages (p. 390). For integrated dual-language books, educators should clearly discuss the book's structure and the interplay between the languages, as students may not discern this on their own.

2.1.3. Proactive UDL and DI in FSL contexts

Finally, researchers have observed how inclusive practices are enacted in FSL contexts like FI and CF. In this body of studies, FSL educators have been shown to use a range of approaches and methods, many of which could be considered to be in line with what is considered "good" UDL / DI. Below are results from select exemplary studies outlining what equitable support for learners and their language development can look like in the FSL context:

- In terms of maximized exposure to the target language (in this case, French), Arnett (2008) asserted that, for students with exceptional needs, limiting the use of the target language can actually risk hindering their overall language development. Similar to earlier findings (i.e., Sparks et al., 1992), Arnett argued that all students - especially those with exceptional needs - benefit from exposure to the target language to build familiarity and confidence. As DI advocates recommend, using supplementary supports such as visual aids and other non-verbal tools can enhance comprehension in bilingual learning contexts. While consistent exposure to the target language is essential, Arnett found that strategically incorporating a students' known languages can help clarify complex vocabulary and abstract concepts, provided it supports rather than replaces the target language. This approach links to arguments for leveraging cross-linguistic transfer in bi/multilingual programming contexts. Arnett (2008) also explored inclusive practices in CF and found that a student-centered approach (i.e., giving students opportunity to have input into their instruction; instruction that aligns with the right kind of support for their needs), which develops all language skills holistically (listening, speaking, reading and writing) is key for inclusive learning experiences. They also explained how peer collaboration plays a significant role in inclusive language practices.
- Mady (2018) observed the inclusive practices and adaptations made by elementary FI educators (n = 8) with between five and 10 years of experience. They observed that educators made positive and effective adaptations for the whole class in the areas of assignments, providing reinforcement, pacing, the physical environment (e.g., alternative seating, minimizing distractions, etc.) and non-academic support (e.g., agendas on the board). However, Mady observed that they employed fewer adaptations for individuals, including grading and assessment, leading to the suggestion that "it may prove beneficial for professional development sessions [....] to focus on creating a variety of assessment options as part of their differentiated [FSL] instruction" (p. 263). Task development with individual

students' needs and interests in mind was also proposed by Mady as a topic of professional learning in this regard.

- In the intensive French program, Joy and Murphy (2012) discovered that educators use a range of supports and approaches for ensuring equitable access to French language learning for students with exceptional needs. The researchers note that the educator-participants (n=8) "rely extensively on modeling, scaffolding, repetition, providing examples, and use of partners" (p. 110). For oral and written production specifically, these educators also encourage students to take advantage of the support materials created together and provided in the classroom, like word walls, pictures, sentence starters, etc. These educators also make use of technology, such as interactive boards, (digital) games and music. Like Arnett (2008), Joy and Murphy found that the educator-participants invited students to collaborate in their language learning by organizing them frequently in groups/pairs. According to these authors, the groups/pairs are designed to include students with exceptionalities with typically developing students, with close monitoring occurring to ensure that the learning experience is positive for all. In the FSL context, Joy and Murphy explain that UDL can be "activity-based and involves hands-on projects" (2012, p. 111), which creates a dynamic space where students are encouraged to move around, discuss and work together. Themes for such learning tasks focused on students' interests, all while maintaining French as the language of instruction. Finally, Joy and Murphy note that teacher-participants observed students with exceptional learning needs thriving in their classrooms, acquiring meaningful French communication skills, and developing a positive attitude towards the language and culture. Participating educators highlighted these students' frequent participation, viewing it as a sign of their willingness to take risks—a result, they believe, of a classroom culture that fosters confidence in all students learning French.

- In their study conducted in an early FI context, Pellerin (2013) explored how the use of digital technologies enables the implementation of inclusive practices. Specifically, 12 early FI educators (grades 1-4) participated in interviews, observation, professional learning (PL), and participant documentation. They leveraged digital technologies including iPods, iPads, interactive boards and laptops. Communication and collaboration among the educators (during the PL) fostered effective implementation of technology mediated inclusive practices, as educators were able to reflect and learn together based on their experiences. Specifically, Pellerin found that using the digital technologies enabled the educator-participants to include "more individualized and guided practice, as well as a more student-centered approach" (2013, p. 55). As the overall classroom environment became more and more student-centered, Pellerin noted that students became more engaged, focused (particularly those with attention disorders), and autonomous in their learning. The technology mediated the provision of multiple access points to the target learning (ex., auditory, visual), as well as multiple ways of demonstrating the target learning (ex., voice recording, typing, handwriting). Finally, the technology mediated inclusive practices gave way to new ways of assessing students. For example, the educator-participants invited students to record themselves, which "enabled [them] to better assess the specific needs of individual students, and in turn

make the necessary modifications to their instructional strategies to support and scaffold the learning of each student" (p. 56).

More information in this regard, and more generally, is provided in the next section on how equitable support should be offered to FSL educators in bi/multilingual programming with an equity of access orientation.

2.2 Equity of Support for EDUCATORS

With much of the research that advocates for equity of access orientations to bi/multilingual programs emphasizing the key role of differentiated learning environments (as seen in the first Guiding Principle section), equitable support for educators as to the "why?" and the "how to?" dimensions related to creating said environments becomes paramount.

The "why" component of providing equitable support to educators is grounded in the well-documented, inextricable link between teacher beliefs and pedagogy (see Buehl & Beck, 2015; Borg, 2018; Fives & Gill, 2015). Support for educators in an equity of access orientation to bi/multilingual programming must begin with an activation and disruption of all educators' beliefs about themes highlighted in the Guiding Principle #1 - Equity of Access section (e.g., the capability of all learners to acquire additional languages). Perhaps most important is responding to a well-established call from researchers in the field of additional language education (e.g., Elsherief & Masson, 2020; Faez, 2011, 2016; Masson, Elsherief & Adatia, 2022; Nation, 2014; Prasad et al., 2023; Reyes et al., n.d.), for stakeholders to embrace the belief that all educators in English language schools are language and bi-multiliteracy educators, including those teaching FSL. In bi/multilingual English-French contexts, research has shown that there is a well-known disconnect between FSL and homeroom / English mainstream teaching in this regard (most acutely in the case of Core French - Knouzi & Mady, 2014). This, despite studies showing that FSL educators can and do plan for literacy teaching, and that they employ strategies that align with those commonly used in literacy teaching of the language of schooling, such as, "modeling and eliciting metalinguistic talk […], shared oral and written language practice […], and guided written production […]", among others (Arnott & Mady, 2013, p. 118; see also Thomas & Mady, 2014). Researchers recommend that all school educators should attend professional learning that aims to increase their awareness of the valuable contribution and wealth of knowledge that FSL educators can offer to students' overall literacy practices (Knouzi & Mady, 2014).

In terms of the "how to?" dimension of an equity of support framework for all educators, the following sections describe central tenets of key pedagogical orientations identified in the research that we feel could be considered in discussions of how to support teacher practice in the context of equitable and inclusive bi/multilingual programming for all students in the Ontario context. The first three pedagogies are grounded in key concepts highlighted in the Guiding Principle #1 - Equity of Access section, namely cross-linguistic transfer, critical multilingual language awareness and inter-/transcultural competence. The remaining pedagogical orientation highlights the integral role of planned and prioritized collaboration as being imperative to this equitable teacher support framework. Considered collectively, these represent

possibilities for what pedagogical professional learning could - and should - focus on when providing equitable support for educators in contexts where all students have access to English-French bi/multilingual programming.

2.2.1. Cross-Linguistic Pedagogy

The concept of cross-linguistic transfer (presented in section 1.3.2) suggests that all students are capable of making meaning from knowledge and skills they have learned in different languages. Cross-linguistic pedagogy is teaching that capitalizes explicitly on that capability, through planning for transfer and/or providing opportunities for language transfer. Cross-linguistic pedagogy in bi/multilingual English-French programming requires all educators to plan for transfer, taking into account learning, teaching and contextual factors unique to their context:

> In the classroom, teachers (in collaboration with students themselves) can acknowledge students' transfer by including languages in the classroom [e.g., activating prior knowledge mediated in students' home languages], making explicit connections among / between [languages], and also connecting literacy practices across languages. In planning for transfer, [L2] teachers can compare curricula for different languages with an eye toward creating learning experiences to activate prior knowledge mediated in any language (Cummins, 2008) and create new connections (Thomas & Mady, 2014, p. 412).

One crucial consideration of such planning for transfer in bi/multilingual programming in Canadian English language school boards must be the minority status of the French language in anglophone schools and their broader communities. Oftentimes, the FSL class is the main/only space in which students will get a chance to practice, take risks, get feedback, and be exposed to high proportions of French input. The dominant use of English in FSL classes by educators and students alike is also prevalent in Canadian research (e.g., Calman & Daniel, 1998; Culligan, 2010, 2015; Harley, 1992; Mison & Jang, 2011; Salvatori, 2007; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Turnbull, 2001; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002; Turnbull et al., 2011), as well as an inferred "plateau effect" suggesting a link between increased English use and slowed rates of minority language development (see Fortune & Tedick, 2015; Swain & Lapkin, 2000).

It is with this in mind that support for educators must take into account researchers' caution against the interpretation of cross-linguistic transfer and cross-linguistic pedagogy to simply mean a welcoming of the majority language (in this case, English) into the minority language classroom (see Ballinger et al., 2017; Fortune & Tedick, 2008. 2019; Thomas & Collier, 2012). Instead, they advocate for cross-linguistic pedagogy that maximizes the use of the minority language (in this case, French) during time allocated to French as the language of schooling in bi/multilingual programming contexts. In turn, they suggest this would protect and expect the use of the minority language (French) in at least one context of English-French programming. Tedick and Lyster (2020) elaborate further on this stance, differentiating between the possibility of dedicating time to each language in classroom instruction versus the impossibility of keeping languages separate in student's minds:

It is important to note that maintaining separate [allocated time] for each instructional language does not involve attempts to keep the languages separate in the students' minds. Indeed, students will naturally rely on the linguistic resources they have at their disposal even when expected to use one language or the other. Moreover, this practice does not preclude cross-linguistic pedagogy. On the contrary, we advocate cross-lingual connections while maintaining separate [allocated time] for each language. (p.60).

Ballinger et al. (2017) echo this argument following their critical analysis of literature on cross-linguistic transfer in Canadian and international contexts. They maintain that fostering a more balanced relationship between English and French requires educators to avoid reinforcing the idea that "English is the only language that holds authentic importance" in the classroom – this means steering clear of (unintentionally) English-biased cross-linguistic practices (p. 47). Furthermore, they reference Lyster and Sato (2013) to suggest that reference to English during French time can be helpful for contrastive purposes, but that it should not be used as a way to avoid students completing cognitively demanding tasks in French. In their view, relying on English to alleviate the difficulties encountered in French is counterproductive to the goal of enhancing French proficiency, especially during class time dedicated to the minority language. In light of this, they suggest situating cross-linguistic pedagogy in the idea that, in Canadian FI, where English (majority language) and French (minority language) are taught, crosslinguistic pedagogy that encourages increased use of the minority language (French) is most advantageous to increasing proficiency in French.

An exemplary study documenting cross-linguistic pedagogy in service of French proficiency in a Canadian immersion context is that of Lyster, Collins and Ballinger (2009) (for others, see Chapter 9 of Tedick & Lyster, 2020). Their investigation examined how students' linguistic resources (whether they be in English, French or another language) could be both acknowledged and exploited for the benefit of proficiency development in both languages. Here, three English and three French educators of the same students in Grades 1 to 3 took turns reading aloud from the same books (copies were available in French and in English) over a four-month period – the French class reading one or more chapters followed by the English class reading the next. The plan was for educators to invite students in each class to expand their overall literacy skills and awareness of specific language features in both languages. In English and French classes, educators drew students' attention to word parts (such as prefixes and suffixes - e.g., courage - courageous or courageux). While this biliteracy orientation was found to have a generally positive impact on students' literacy skills in both languages (see Lyster et al., 2009; Lyster, Quiroga & Ballinger, 2013), it also underscores the optimization of an equitable distribution of both languages alongside separate allocation of time for each instructional language. Ballinger et al. (2017) elaborate on this important feature of cross-linguistic pedagogy in the Lyster et al. (2009) study, noting that:

> …each language remained the language of communication in its respective classroom, even though boundaries between the languages and classrooms were crossed as students engaged with the themes of the books in both languages and participated in related content in both French and English, enabling them to learn new concepts with different linguistic representations. (2017, p.48).

Considered collectively, equitable support for educators in implementing crosslinguistic pedagogies should therefore begin by enabling them to reflect on the English-dominant Canadian context and its implications, as well as ways to forge cross-lingual connections while maintaining separate spaces for minority / majority language use.

2.2.2. *Linguistically Expansive Practice*

Quality language education engages and leverages all linguistic and cultural knowledge that students bring to the classroom. Calls have been made to move beyond uni-dimensional understandings of diversity towards a more "superdiversity", which refers to the recognition of the intersections of different factors contributing to student diversity (including languages, religions, countries of origin, immigration status, migration channels, etc. - see Blommaert, 2013; Vertovec, 2007). When considered alongside the goal of ensuring equitable access to (language) learning for all students within the historically recognized official English-French bilingual context of Canada, the reality of superdiversity motivates a shift toward a more linguistically expansive approach to teaching and learning additional languages. According to Prasad (2024), linguistically expansive practice focuses on goal-setting for language programming that moves beyond simply achieving maximum competence in multiple languages towards also helping students develop a wide range of linguistic skills and a sensitivity to cultural diversity. More specifically, a linguistically expansive orientation to teaching and learning aims to collaboratively develop all students' critical multilingual language awareness (CMLA - described in "Guiding Principle #1 - Equity of Access") and their distinct linguistic repertoires, particularly by conceiving of said repertoires as a resource, not a burden, and by supporting all students in becoming "language-aware multilingual allies" (Prasad, 2022, p. 402). In a bilingual context where linguistically expansive practice is adopted, majority-language dominant students (such as English-speaking students in FI) are encouraged to recognize their linguistic privilege, while minority-language dominant students benefit from an environment that supports their unique linguistic repertoires (Ballinger, 2017; Prasad, 2024). Supporting all students in becoming critically aware of their (linguistic) power differences also involves developing their transcultural competence, with the goal being to foster the awareness that individuals' diverse cultural identities are an asset and the norm (Prasad, 2024).

Hamman-Ortiz and Prasad (2022) emphasize that educators must first have the opportunity to reflect on monolingual norms, multilingual allyship, and their linguistic privilege in order to then enact linguistic expansive pedagogies. Subsequent professional learning for all educators in this regard involves exploration of the following types of practices and strategies (see Hamman-Ortiz & Prasad, 2022; Prasad, 2022, 2024):
- encouraging students to take linguistic risks, mediate meaning across languages, and collaborate on multilingual tasks;
- intentionally recognizing linguistic diversity in the classroom by spotlighting all students' entire linguistic repertoires (their L1 and L+, the primary language of instruction, the local Indigenous languages, etc.);
- explicitly analyzing how languages function;

- engaging students in conversations where they verbalize their internal social representations of language(s) and decenter their own personal dominant language;
- welcoming the cultural and linguistic expertise of the community beyond the classroom;
- creating possibilities to explore different languages and conventions of print;
- offering students opportunities to participate in and share collaborative plurilingual projects within metalinguistically rich learning environments;
- deliberately acknowledging the power relations existing in languages and among their speakers.

2.2.3. Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy

Culturally relevant learning experiences are essential in 21st century classrooms to ensure all students feel represented and engaged in their language learning, and to work to dismantle racist and colonial practices and ideologies. An equity of support orientation to bi/multilingual programming that emphasizes access for all students should work to infuse this pedagogy across all subjects offered in both languages, particularly given the rich and strong connections between culture and language described in the Guiding Principle #1 - Equity of Access section.

In this vein, culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy (CRRP) has been prioritized in English language education (see Ladson-Billings, 2021; Li, 2018; Mellom et al., 2018; Santamaria, 2009); however, its place in the FSL context has only recently been researched in more detail (see Adatia, 2023; Prasad, 2020; Kunnas, 2023). According to Masson et al. (2022), CRRP is especially imperative for bi/multilingual programming that includes French as a target language (as is most such programming in Canada), as the French language is entrenched in a colonial past. Faroogh (2021) adds that French-speaking Indigenous, Black, and non-white racialized children seldom see their backgrounds represented in FSL classrooms; and Black and non-white racialized children from non-French-speaking families often don't recognize that most global French speakers look like them.

Adopting CRRP in English-French bi/multilingual programming entails providing opportunities for both students and educators to broaden their understanding of languages and Francophone cultures beyond a White Eurocentric perspective. For Faroogh (2021), this means bringing students attention beyond France and Québec, to various representations of French speakers in Canada (ex., l'Acadie, Canadian Indigenous communities, etc.), as well as to where the language is spoken (ex., Sub- Saharan Africa) and why (ex., France's role in slavery, etc.). For Masson (2021), this means building/fostering authentic relationships with/among students through care and empathy; contextualizing grammar and vocabulary in intersectional and diverse francophone stories and perspectives on race, gender and religion; and positioning students as active agents and co-creators of the FSL curriculum. Professional learning should encourage educators to reflect on Canada's colonial history, "on our work, our positionalities, and our students through […] critical lenses to challenge ideologies rooted in racist, biased, or White supremacist lines of thinking" (Masson et al., 2022, p. 387). On a practical level, supporting educators with access to relevant resources is also crucial. A key example of this is the FSL Disrupt Project, an Ontario-based FSL initiative that provides resources, tools and

support for culturally relevant FSL pedagogy and promotes knowledge sharing among educators.

2.2.4. Collaboration: Co-Planning and Co-Teaching

As seen in the previous sections, cross-linguistic pedagogy and linguistically expansive practice both thrive in environments that prioritize collaboration amongst educators of different languages and content areas. One specific form of collaboration that could be deemed to support language learning across English and French "solitudes" in a bi/multilingual programming context is co-planning and co-teaching. Honigsfeld (2010) posits that co-planning and co-teaching can particularly support additional language learning by allowing educators to share resources, strategies and expertise, which can enhance language learning and better support students' social-emotional needs. They assert that through collaboration, homeroom educators and language educators, for example, can create a cohesive approach by adapting content and establishing language learning objectives that span different school contexts and that incorporate students' cultural backgrounds and prior knowledge. Specifically, in this type of collaboration, "[language] specialists have the opportunity to share their expertise in second language acquisition, cross-cultural understanding, bi/multilingualism and bi/multiculturalism, and literacy development" (p. 34). This can also extend to community networks, which can provide more comprehensive support for additional language learners and their families.

In Canadian contexts, opportunities for collaboration have proven to be an effective way to provide equitable support to all educators implicated in bi/multilingual programming. Le Bouthillier found this to be the case for promoting inclusive practices, where collaboration between educators enables congruence and predictability in learning activities for students with exceptional needs as they navigate different school learning environments, which is beneficial for reducing anxiety and fostering meaningful learning. Lyster et al. (2009) also noted the risks associated with devaluing the role of collaboration in biliteracy teaching, noting that a lack of collaborative planning amongst participating English and French educators resulted in lost opportunities for cross-linguistic transfer.

Fostering teacher collaboration often requires educators to have access to both time and resources to implement co-planning and co-teaching effectively. Indeed, Honigsfeld (2010) asserts that school administrators play a crucial role in effectively managing school organization and logistics for collaboration to be possible; in developing and sustaining a collaborative school culture; and in optimally managing resources to facilitate collaboration. Specifically, they suggest that school administrators can support collaboration by establishing an inclusive culture where colleagues feel safe to take the risk to initiate collaboration; by ascertaining (whenever possible) the feasibility of accommodating the scheduling needs of educators related to instruction and preparation time; and by providing educators with access to materials that support effective collaboration (ex., bi-multilingual books; Honigsfeld, 2010).

2.3 Equity of Support for SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

An equity of access orientation to bi/multilingual programming for all necessitates an equity of support for school administrators. Like teachers, such support must focus on school administrator beliefs as well as their practices in relation to how to support bi/multilingual English-French programming in their schools.

Despite being the most under-researched stakeholder group in post-millennial FSL research (see Masson et al., 2021), school administrators have progressively become the targeted audience for professional learning resources on how to support language educators in their schools (see Association Canadienne des Professionnels de l'Immersion, n.d.; Bowels, 2023; CASLT, n.d.; Catholic Principals' Council, n.d, n.d.; Transforming FSL, 2015, 2016, 2016, 2023; OME, 2013, 2015, 2016; Ontario Principals' Council, n. d.). In regards to FSL specifically, a recent and relevant publication by Ontario Public School Board's Association (OPSBA, 2023) highlights four areas where school administrators require support for addressing common challenges in FSL programming and instruction in schools:

1. The first area is in the provision of opportunities for collaboration among school administrators in order to share specific FSL-related issues and solutions (ex., knowledge related to programming, successful practices, etc.).
2. The second area concerns school administrator modeling of how to communicate the value of French more explicitly to educators, students and parents/guardians in the school. Supporting school administrators in this effort includes providing professional learning and resources that enhance their ability to use French in interactions with staff and students outside the classroom, fill the school environment with visible French language and cultural references, and highlight FSL programs on school websites, among other activities (OPSBA, 2023).
3. The third area relates to the need for school administrators to have equitable access to resources and professional learning for themselves and their FSL teachers.
4. Finally, the fourth area highlights the importance of school administrators having opportunities to build relationships with their FSL educators. OPSBA (2023) suggest that this could occur through opportunities to:
   - co-learn with FSL educators about best practices;
   - raise consciousness about the importance of checking in with FSL educators (concerning challenges of classroom management, isolation, achievements) throughout the school year;
   - highlight FSL educators' skills in staff meetings/throughout the school year;
   - prioritize strategic release time for FSL/non-FSL teacher collaboration; and
   - organize informal FSL social events, etc.

Milley and Arnott (2016) would agree that the actions mentioned above are essential for effective FSL administrative leadership. Although their study discussed strategies school administrators may or may not use to support CF educators', these strategies are equally applicable in the FI context (Arnott & Masson, 2019). Key best practices for administrative FSL

leadership include ensuring equitable access to current FSL resources, sharing the challenge of FSL classroom management, promoting and supporting FSL instructional leadership, and making French language and culture visible and valued within the school environment (Milley & Arnott, 2016). In addition to the above, Bowels (2023) suggests that (FI) principals should not forget to leverage support from their FSL consultant, especially regarding upcoming PD, resources, and association/community events. Additionally, Mady and Masson (2018) propose that it is crucial for school administrators to have opportunities to reflect on and develop their beliefs on the inclusion of multilingual learners in FSL programming, as their study's participants demonstrated contradictory and misinformed conceptions on this topic.

An equity of support framework for school administrators should therefore begin by prioritizing the areas outlined above. An exemplary starting point for this could be enhancing school administrator access to the professional learning modules designed by the Ontario Principals' Council to support school administrators in FSL teacher retention and FSL program development (see Ontario Principals' Council, n. d.).

2.4 Equity of Support for PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Another key stakeholder for whom support is crucial in an equity of access orientation to bi/multilingual education are parents/guardians. Education of children and youth does not exist uniquely within the school, it extends to the home and to the community. Supporting parents/guardians is integral to successful bi/multilingual education for all.

In terms of empirical research, only 10% of post-millennial studies in Canadian FSL research have focused on parents/guardians as study participants (Masson et al., 2021). Researchers who have recruited parents/guardians have sought to understand parental beliefs and experiences with accessing FSL programs (see Bourgoin, 2016; Cobb, 2015; Mady & Arnett, 2009). These studies found that parents/guardians' experiences with access to FI are influenced by educators' beliefs and advice and accessibility to special education supports (see Bourgoin, 2016; Cobb, 2015). Specifically, while some parents/guardians are misadvised about FI due to teacher misconceptions (Bourgoin, 2016), others face challenges related to the availability of resources for special education (Cobb, 2015; Mady & Arnett, 2009). Additionally, the socioeconomic background of parents/guardians influences the decision-making process, with middle-income parents/guardians being more active in school choices, while lower-income families adapt differently to FI opportunities (Makropoulos, 2009).

Research has also focused on parents/guardians' implication in their child's literacy development. Specifically, one study showed that parents/guardians value the transmission of their heritage language and culture, viewing multilingualism as a means for cultural preservation and socio-economic advancement, and thus actively foster literacy development at home through heritage language activities (Moore, 2010). Finally, this body of research has also investigated parents/guardians' beliefs regarding Canadian bi/multilingualism. These studies have found that parents/guardians are proud of their children's English-French bilingualism but often believe their children need more practice in francophone environments and may never

achieve equal proficiency in both languages, contributing to a broader discourse that views bilingualism as two separate monolingual competencies (Roy, 2010, 2012, 2015). Other studies discovered that, parents/guardians, particularly immigrant parents/guardians, view multilingualism and English-French bilingualism as valuable (cultural, social, economic) assets for their children's future, with FI acting as a strategic way to maintain home languages while adding French (Dalley, 2009; Davis et al., 2019; Moore, 2010), thereby increasing their children's opportunities in a bilingual Canadian society (Carr, 2009; Dagenais, 2003, 2008; Dagenais & Jacquet, 2000; Mady, 2015a).

One enduring theme in the research literature has also been the linguistic insecurity of parents/guardians who do not speak French, and their child is in FSL programming, particularly in French immersion contexts. Studies have shown that parents/guardians wish to be more involved in their children's FI learning but feel that they lack the language skills necessary to do so (Eagle, 1996; von Mende, 2000). Hart et al. (2010) argued that parents/guardians often feel like they cannot support their child's FI education as much as they would like to, especially in the early years when children commonly seek more at-home support. They found that when they did seek out resources, the ones they used the most to help with homework were the internet, as well as resources from the school, from home and from the community library (ex., dictionaries, grammar texts). Hart et al. advocate for additional parental support that would look like "more or better resources' [..] and 'help beyond the classroom" such as after-school tutoring, live online help, audio dictionaries, etc. (2010, p.16).

Additional concrete strategies to assist parents/guardians in supporting their child's bilingual education include encouraging them to get involved in their child's classroom activities. For example, Moore and Sabatier (2014) invited parents/guardians to read multilingual books in their child's FI classroom. These researchers found that this practice strengthened the home-school-community connection. Activities like this are critical, not only for fostering the kind of linguistically expansive practice (Prasad, 2024) described earlier, but also for reducing feelings of alienation among parents/guardians regarding their child's bilingual education (von Mende, 2000, as cited in Hart et al., 2010). Indeed, von Mende (2010) reminds us that educators might waste a valuable (linguistic and cultural) resource by not involving parents/guardians in the classroom (as cited in Hart et al., 2010). To open schools' doors to such possibilities, school boards and school administrators must not only bring educators' awareness to initiatives like this, but also support their efforts in doing so. This could include providing support for welcoming parents/guardians as 'multilingual experts' into schools and classrooms in culturally sensitive and multilingual ways (Prasad, 2017, 2024).

It's worth noting that while much has changed – especially since the COVID-19 pandemic and the surge in virtual learning platforms like Google Classroom and Brightspace – parents/guardians' desire to support their child's FI education has remained strong. As school boards implement online learning platforms and ensure equitable access to technology, such as Chromebooks at school and home, parents/guardians' contemporary needs in supporting their children in bilingual education may look different than 15 years ago. However, it remains crucial to dispel myths about their French linguistic skills and to understand how to best meet their

needs. In the context of bi/multilingual education for all, it would be imperative to consult with parents/guardians about all forms of support they would require.

In this vein, the CPF organization is one the primary sources of support and advocacy for parents/guardians in the context of Canadian bilingual English-French education. CPF has conducted numerous studies and research reviews on relevant topics for parents/guardians of children in bilingual education contexts. They notably urge all parents/guardians to be positive and enthusiastic about the prospect of their child learning French in today's Canadian schools, highlighting that research demonstrates such attitudes positively impact students' learning (see CPF, n.d., n.d.). Their resources also rightly inform parents/guardians about many of the themes addressed in this review, including the common underlying proficiency of their children and the possibilities of cross-linguistic transfer when parents/guardians actively engage their child in literacy activities in whatever language(s) they use at home. In 1996, in partnership with the Alberta provincial government, CPF published a resource document for parents/guardians of FI students providing information on the program and their role as parents/guardians. This document proposes strategies for helping FI children with homework for parents/guardians without French language skills. Some strategies mentioned include helping children understand by way of translation, helping with research, making connections to real-life examples, etc. Publications like this are crucial for dispelling the myth that parents/guardians who don't speak French cannot adequately support their children with FI schoolwork. Overall, CPF is an integral stakeholder in any equity of support framework for bi/multilingual education for all - school boards, school administrators and educators should make every effort to ensure parents/guardians are aware of their resources, and if possible, support them in accessing and taking advantage of them.

Concluding Remarks

The aim of this research review was to spotlight key principles that stakeholders should keep front-of-mind when contemplating how to design equitable L2/FSL programming for all K-12 learners in Ontario school systems. Figure 1 graphically summarizes the evidence-based understandings that we feel decision-makers must appreciate and keep front-of-mind when contemplating moving towards a goal of equitable bi-multilingual programming for all students. After acknowledging the research documenting the diverse benefits of additional language learning and that every learner is a capable language learner (#1), decision-makers must move to adopting both guiding principles of Equity of Access (#2) and Equity of Support (#3). The smaller spiraling dotted lines are meant to highlight the regular and ongoing reflection we advocate decision-makers to engage in when considering each area individually. Furthermore, we see these three areas as being most impactful when their potential intersectionalities are considered, as shown by the larger spiraling dotted line encompassing them all. For example, we consider the guiding principles of Equity of Access and Equity of Support as being mutually inclusive, meaning that both cannot exist independent of one another in an orientation of bi/multilingual English-French programming for all. As stakeholders reflect and receive feedback on action or experimentation in this regard, our thinking about these inter-relationships and our equitable practices will continue to evolve. We suggest that such evolution creates space for thinking and practice that will eventually implicate other dimensions of equity linked to student experiences as well as outcomes (#4).
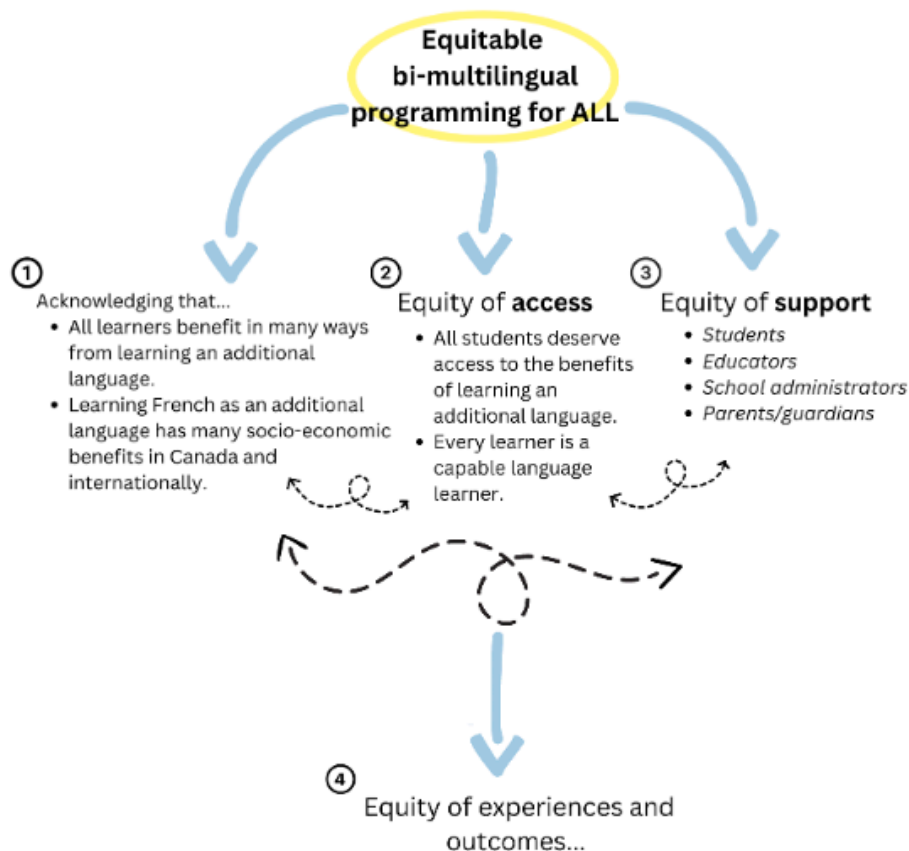
Figure 1: *Guiding principles when planning equitable bi-multilingual programming for all.*

For years, researchers and stakeholders have been attempting to figure out the most ideal overall design for bi/multilingual English-French programming. In the case of FSL programming in English-language contexts, decisionmakers have typically turned to variants of FI programs (e.g., early, middle, late, full, partial, etc.) as the idyllic starting point for figuring out how to optimize students' bilingual proficiency. The impact and inter-relation of factors such as age of entry, degree of intensity, total cumulative time spent in the target language and the pedagogical approach to language teaching are typically the main FSL features on the table for discussion of how best to help students attain French proficiency (see Dicks & Kristmanson, 2008; Lazaruk, 2007). In their article entitled *"French immersion: When and why?",* Dicks and Kristmanson (2008) acknowledge one critically relevant point in relation to the findings of this review:

> The first three variables [age of entry, degree of intensity and total cumulative time spent in the target language] can be controlled fairly easily; the fourth variable, pedagogical approach, is much more challenging (p.3)

While challenging, the research reviewed above shows how this fourth variable related to pedagogy is imperative to an equity of support orientation to bi/multilingual programming for all. For us, pedagogy in an equity of access and support orientation is not only linked only to individuals, but to the collective, involving students, educators, school administrators and parents/guardians. It is with this in mind that we conclude by acknowledging that while we feel

that the inter-relation of these four factors remain relevant, we wonder how these and other possible factors interrelate when discussing how to design bi/multilingual programming with an orientation toward equity of access and equity of support. To our knowledge, there are no studies researching the salience of these factors - or the emergence of others - in a context of bi/multilingual programming for all. Consequently, we feel it is imperative to carefully consider the caveat that "no one [immersion] program offers the perfect solution" (Dicks & Kristmanson, 2008, p. 3) and that contextual factors like resource availability and proficiency goals are therefore fundamental to how any bi-multilingual program for all would be designed, delivered, experienced by students, and what student outcomes it would produce.

It would be our hope that this research review can act as a way to sharpen our thinking as we enter transformative conversations and/or take novel action in the name of inclusive education in Canadian bi/multilingual programming contexts.

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